

## POST-COVID-19 NEUROLOGICAL SYNDROMES

V.V. Belopasov<sup>1</sup>, E.N. Zhuravleva<sup>2</sup>, N.P. Nugmanova<sup>1</sup>, A.T. Abdzashitova<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Astrakhan State Medical University, Astrakhan, Russian Federation

<sup>2</sup> Regional Clinical Hospital, Astrakhan, Russian Federation

*The article covers the pathogenesis and clinical manifestations of the damage to the central and peripheral nervous systems in COVID-19 patients, which appeared or remained in the post-COVID-19 period (Long-COVID-19). Their correct assessment, application of efficient approaches to the complex treatment and targeted neurorehabilitation provide a reversible character of the functional impairment, prevention or reduction of disability, improvement of the quality of life, prevent the progression of cognitive, emotional, behavioral disorders initiated by SARS-CoV-2.*

**Keywords:** subacute; chronic COVID-19; diseases of central and peripheral nervous system.

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### List of abbreviations

CT — computed tomography

CPK — creatine phosphokinase

MRI — magnetic resonance imaging

PET — positron emission tomography

COVID-19 (COronaVirus Disease 2019) — coronavirus infection of 2019

SARS-CoV-2 — a novel severe acute respiratory syndrome-related coronavirus 2

### BACKGROUND

Awareness of clinical forms, their combinations, diagnostic algorithms, and methods of objective assessment, characteristic of the post-COVID period of functional and structural changes in the brain, autonomic and peripheral nervous system, is important not only for making a diagnosis, choosing pharmacotherapy and methods of neurorehabilitation, but also for predicting the results, substantiation of prophylactic measures to prevent the negative impact of the disease on the physical, social, and mental well-being of the patient, prevent negative outcomes in the form of loss of labour capacity, disability, and delayed long-term consequences of coronavirus infection (chronic angioencephalopathy, structural epilepsy, parkinsonism, leucoencephalopathy, and other progressive forms of neurodegenerative and autoimmune pathology).

During the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the assessment by the attending physician (neurologist, physiotherapist, rehabilitation therapist, psychotherapist) of a patient who has had COVID-19 is determined by his health condition at the time of seeking medical help, the presence of clinical manifestations and complications identified in him in the acute phase, the success

of the therapy, as well as the continuing consequences of the disease that affect negatively the quality of life. Hans Kluge, Head of the European Regional Office of the World Health Organization, commented: “We have passed the worst case scenario. We know more about the coronavirus compared to 2020, when it just began to spread.” The mechanisms of invasion and clinical manifestations of SARS-CoV-2 before entering and during the patient’s stay in the hospital are mainly characterized [1–5], and those that arise and persist during treatment at home, as well as after discharge from the infectious diseases department for follow-up treatment and rehabilitation, require comprehension.

In our review, we will focus on neurological complications and psychosomatic disorders in the post-COVID period, which doctors register at outpatient visits and in hospitals.

Already in the first months after the announcement by the World Health Organization of the onset of a pandemic and the need to manage its consequences [6], during the functional assessment of the condition of patients at all stages of the disease, the time periods for the onset and maintenance of clinical symptoms were outlined, which reflected its severity and localiza-

tion depending on the damage of organ or organs and target systems; and the types and subtypes of long COVID syndrome have been developed and subsequently refined [7, 8]:

- type 1 (acute COVID-19) is characterized by the development of poorly or insufficiently curable deficient structural disorders during the period of infection of the patient;
- type 2 is characterized by ongoing symptomatic course for 4–12 weeks after being infected with COVID-19;
- type 3 (long COVID, long haulers, longhaul COVID-19 syndrome, more than 12 weeks) is characterized by continuous, relapsing, remitting course ( $\geq 3$  months for *subtype 3A*,  $\geq 6$  months for *subtype 3B*) after almost complete recovery or reduction of the initial symptoms;
- type 4 is characterized by in the asymptomatic course of the acute period, and sudden development of organ pathology after 1–3 months (*subtype 4A*) or more (*subtype 4B*);
- the type 5 is characterized by a lethal outcome causally associated with a latent disease of the lungs, myocardium, and vessels supplying them and the brain [9, 10].

This approach enables to diagnose, treat, and rehabilitate patients, regardless of their age, outside COVID hospitals. Persistent or re-emerging symptoms, functional disorders associated with COVID-19, in  $\geq 50\%$  of cases, according to the questionnaire survey and analysis of the disease outcomes in hospitals and clinics, affect negatively the quality of life, mobility, and independence of patients seeking medical help [11–14].

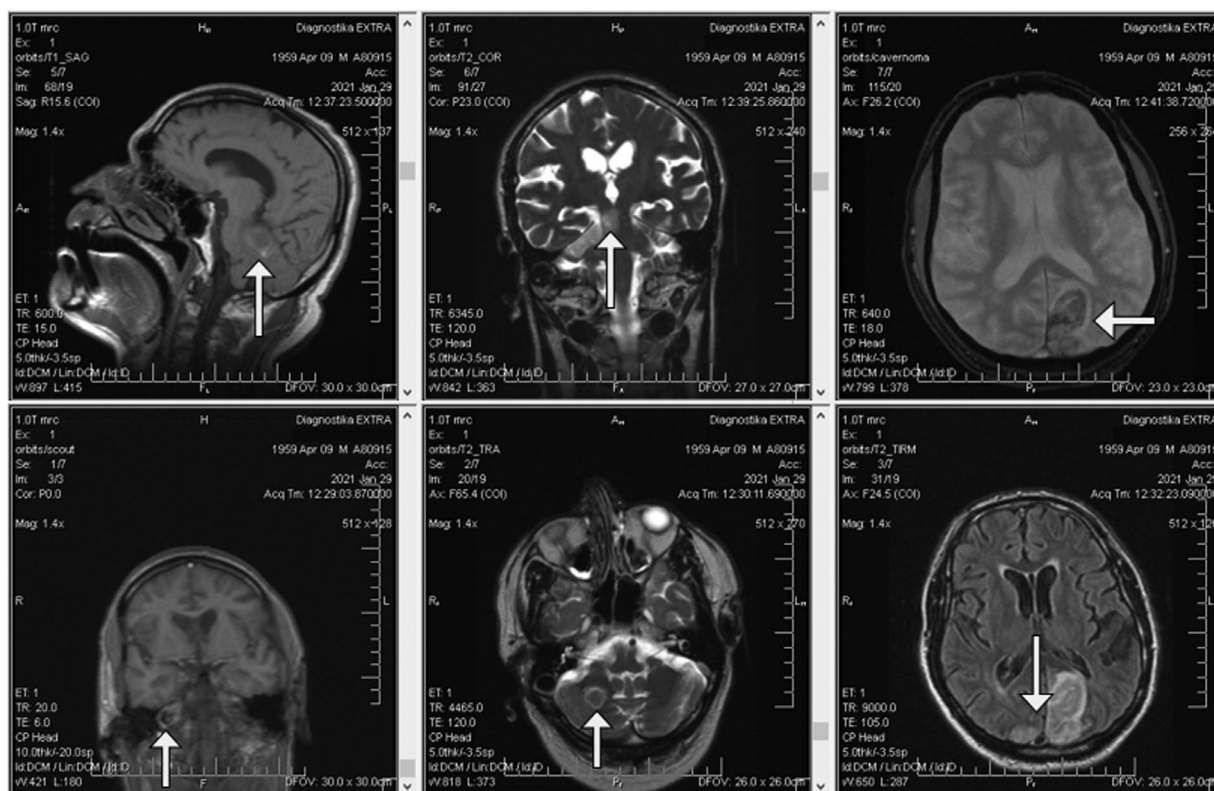
Symptoms requiring the attention of a neurologist include re-emerging or persisting local pain; tachycardia; unproductive, heavy cough uncontrollable by broncho- and mucolytics; periodic drop in the level of saturation with pulse oximetry; dyspnea; paresthesia; diplopia; hiccups; decrease/loss of sense of smell, taste, vision, hearing; fatigue; dizziness; poor exercise tolerance; loss of appetite or muscle mass; sudden “shutdown” of consciousness; focal and generalized seizures; changes in mood, speech, gait; disorder of swallowing, coordination, memory, behavior, sleep, thermoregulation; the presence or progression of asthenia, and numbness in the extremities [15, 16].

**Cephalalgia.** Its main types, with the exclusion of “red” and “orange flags” [17], are episodic or permanent tension headache; cough headache arising during physical and cognitive stress; compression/ischemic (from compression of the pericranial muscles, scalp,

soft tissues, blood vessels with protective helmets, masks, glasses) secondary headache (with inflammation of the paranasal sinuses, meningoencephalitis, diffuse leukoencephalopathy, vasculitis, epidural hematoma, cerebral apoplexy, thrombosis of the sinuses and veins, hemorrhage in the pituitary gland, intracranial hypertension, hypoxia, hypercapnia, cerebral edema) [18, 19], as well as new (previously absent), pulsating or pressing, moderate to severe, holocranial, prolonged (more than 72 hours), migraine-like headache associated with activation of the trigeminovascular system, resistant to standard therapy, associated with systemic viral infection (lung damage, elevated blood levels of D-dimer, IL-6, TNF- $\alpha$ , thrombocytopenia, lymphopenia, hyperferritinemia) [20–22]. Changes in the frequency or severity of attacks, increase in doses of drugs compared to the period before the pandemic, transformation into a chronic form take place in the presence of migraine in patients prior to infection with SARS-CoV-2 [23]. An aspect of post-COVID migraine-like cephalalgia is its persistence for more than 6 weeks with the disappearance of other symptoms of COVID-19 [24, 25]. The development of pseudomigraine, orofacial, temporomandibular, and masticatory pain is usually associated with psychogenic stress or local myositis [26, 27].

**Craniopathy.** Disorders of smell, taste, vision, and hearing with the onset in the acute period of the disease are most often reversible within the first 3 weeks [4, 28, 29]. The absence or partial restoration of the sensory system is noted in inflammatory neuropathies of cranial nerves I, II, IV, VII, VIII [30–34], iatrogenic damage to the nerves X, XII (Tapia syndrome) after tracheal intubation [35]. Involvement of nerves II, III, V, VI in the pathological process is possible with thrombosis of the cavernous sinus [36], and that of nerves III, VII, IX, X, XII is possible with stem stroke (own case; Fig. 1), autoimmune complications (Guillain-Barré syndrome, Miller Fisher syndrome) [37, 38], involvement of nerve X is possible in sensory laryngeal neuropathy (SLN) [39], postviral vagal neuropathy (PVVN), clinically manifested in the form of persistent, therapy-tolerant cough arrested by the intake of amitriptyline, gabapentin [40, 41].

**Autoimmune complications** are inflammatory demyelinating polyradiculoneuropathies (Guillain-Barré syndrome, Miller Fisher syndrome), leukoencephalopathy, autoimmune encephalitis, Bickerstaff rhombencephalitis, limbic encephalitis, anti-NMDAR encephalitis, acute disseminated encephalomyelitis, transverse/longitudinal myelitis, opticomyelitis,



**Fig. 1.** Arterio-arterial cerebral embolism of basal artery branches. Right-side hemi-syndrome of the brainstem, cerebellum. Asymmetric infarctions of occipital lobes.

multiple sclerosis, myasthenia gravis *de novo*, multiple mononeuritis, and cervicobrachial plexopathy [4, 42–45]. Some of these forms debut in the post-COVID period [46, 47], one of the dramatic complications of which is Graves' malignant edematous exophthalmos (autoimmune thyroiditis) (own case, Fig. 2). There have also been isolated cases of post-vaccination transverse myelitis, the development of Guillain-Barré syndrome after COVID-19 vaccination with Pfizer [48, 49], but the number of patients with post-vaccination immune-mediated complications should not increase, since there is no evidence of a causal relationship

between their development and vaccination against COVID-19.

**Deficient forms of damage to the nervous system that persist in the early recovery period.** Patients with partially recovered or persisting speech, motor, sensory, autonomic, mental, and cognitive impairments need to continue personalized treatment and conduct rehabilitation measures using a multidisciplinary approach, traditional and new technologies during the first 6 months after discharge from the hospital. Methods and scope of treatment are determined by nosology and forms of neurological complications



**Fig. 2.** Malignant edematous Graves' exophthalmos. Chemosis, ophthalmoplegia.



such as meningoencephalitis; encephalitis; leukoencephalitis; Parkinson's syndrome, locked-in-syndrome; cerebellitis; Bickerstaff rhombencephalitis; leukoencephalopathy; encephalopathy of critical conditions; thrombosis of the cerebral sinuses and cerebral veins; ischemic, hemorrhagic strokes; spinal stroke; encephalomyelitis; myelitis; opticomyelitis; plexopathy; mono-, multi-, polyneuropathy; neuromyopathy; myasthenia gravis [4, 50–52].

**Thoracalgia** (muscle-tonic, myofascial, viscerogenic) occurs with pleuritis, pulmonary fibrosis; cough; breathing (at rest, during physical exertion); hyperventilation; spasm of greater, smaller pectoral, serratus anterior, and trapezius muscles; sternal syndrome (angina pectoris, myocardial infarction) in 64% of patients in the acute period and in 31% in the recovery period [53, 54]; with chronic fatigue syndrome; in isolated cases with myocarditis, cardiomyopathy, pericarditis, aortitis, dissection of the aorta, thrombosis of the aorta, pulmonary artery and its branches, fractured ribs with cough, pneumothorax, pneumomediastinum, mediastinal emphysema, rupture of the diaphragm, intercostal pneumothorax, penetration of the stomach and small intestine into the chest cavity [55, 56].

**Abdominalgia.** Its emergence in the presence or absence of respiratory symptoms may be associated with a spasm of the abdominal muscles; cough hernia of the abdomen; intestinal dyskinesia; the development of pneumoperitoneum, pancreatitis, hepatitis, acute liver failure, drug-induced gastroenteritis, colitis; exacerbation of comorbid forms of gastrointestinal diseases in patients; dissection of the aorta; aortitis [57–59]; thrombosis of the mesenteric and splenic arteries or their branches [60, own case].

**Neuropathic post-COVID pain** (acute and chronic) occurs during inflammation, ischemia, compression damage to peripheral nerves, plexuses, activation of neurons in the posterior horns of the spinal cord, autonomic fibers of the sympathetic nervous system, as well as involvement of the thalamus and somatosensory cortex in the pathological process [61, 62]. The main cohort is represented by patients discharged for follow-up care and rehabilitation after intensive care in a COVID hospital (post-intensive care syndrome, critical illness neuropathy and polyneuropathy, CIN). Compression of peripheral nerves and their branches (nerve entrapment sensory neuropathy, NESN) on the upper and lower extremities in moderate to severe acute respiratory distress syndrome is possible in the prone position. Symptoms typical for neuropathic pain (the presence of paresthesias, hyperpathia, allodynia,

signs of autonomic dysfunction) are typical of postherpetic neuralgia, diabetic painful neuropathy, notalgia paresthetica (damage to the paravertebral posterior branches of the spinal nerves and ganglia), sensory peripheral neuropathies, Parsonage-Turner sensory amyotrophic neuralgia, axonal and demyelinating variants of inflammatory and parainfectious polyradiculoneuropathies [63–65]. The development of central post-stroke pain is caused by damage to the thalamus, brain stem, and spinothalamic tracts [66, 67].

**Lesions of the peripheral nervous system** are manifested in the form of mononeuropathies, multiple neuropathies, polyneuropathies, plexopathies, polyradiculoneuropathies, in the genesis of which, in addition to inflammation and compression [68, 69], a significant role is played by molecular mimicry between viral proteins and peripheral nerve proteins (GM1, GD1a, GT1a, GQ1b) [70, 71].

**Post-COVID epileptic seizures.** Carriage of the virus, its penetration into the neurons of the cerebral cortex does not initiate the epileptiform activity, and does not affect the clinical characteristics and frequency of seizures in COVID-19 patients. Structural and functional disorganization in the lesion focus, caused by an inflammatory, autoimmune process, and cerebral ischemia in the acute stage of the disease provoked by SARS-CoV-2, is important, but not decisive for the epilepticization of neurons [72, 73]. In the post-COVID period, epileptic seizures can occur and proceed severely (serially in the form of non-convulsive and convulsive epileptic status, as bilateral tonic-clonic, myoclonic seizures or, extremely rarely, opsoclonus-myoclonus) not only in patients with epilepsy [74, 75]. Their development is possible to be associated with structural changes of a different etiology that have not been identified in the premorbid period (atrophy, hippocampal sclerosis, developmental anomalies, malformations, brain trauma) [73].

**Chronic fatigue syndrome** (CFS), also called Iceland disease; myalgic encephalomyelitis (ME); epidemic neuromyasthenia gravis; post-viral asthenia syndrome; post-active phase of infectious syndromes (PAPIS); chronic fatigue syndrome and immune dysfunction (CFIDS), systemic exertion intolerance disease (SEID). Clinical manifestations are characterized by varying degrees of severity, protracted or undulating course. The main negative signs, such as dyspnea, poor tolerance or inability to perform physical and cognitive loads, fatigue that does not disappear after rest, post-exertional malaise (PEM), muscle pain/myalgia of various localization, persist for at least 6

months after a viral infection that initiates the production of cytotoxins, proinflammatory cytokines, and autoantibodies against key enzymes that ensure the functioning of mitochondria and self-regulation of energy metabolism [76, 77]. Influenza viruses, herpes simplex types I, II, VI, Epstein-Barr virus, cytomegalovirus, hepatitis C, and since 2020 SARS-CoV-2, are classified as causative viruses [78, 79]. Accompanying symptoms include subfebrile condition; episodes of fever, hyperhidrosis; lymphadenopathy; lymphocytopenia; persistent cough, persistent shortness of breath; decrease in  $\text{SpO}_2$  during exercise; tightness in the chest; muscle weakness; paresthesia; migratory arthralgias; fibromyalgia; headache; poor tolerance to light or noise; non-systemic dizziness; brain fog; syncope-like paroxysms; postural fulminant orthostatic hypotension; tachycardia; dysphoria; sensory-perceptual, somatized, communication, behavioral, or affective disorders; sexual dysfunction; disorders of falling asleep, sleep, memory, attention, and comprehension [80, 81]. These complications are noted in 30–50% of convalescents, more often in women than in men and children; their severity and persistence is higher in patients treated in intensive care units and resuscitation departments, with multiple organ and comorbid forms of pathology [82, 83]. The continuing negative changes in physical and social functioning affect negatively the quality of life, and assessment of the ongoing drug therapy and rehabilitation of patients [84].

**Cognitive impairments.** Their development and progression are based on persistent hypoperfusion of the brain; metabolic disorders; virus-induced structural damage to neurons (areas of the brain that provide fixation and preservation of memory are affected in a varying degree, namely the cortex of the temporal and occipital lobes, hippocampus, amygdaloid body, thalamus, and cerebellum); secondary impairment of the functioning of neurochemical mechanisms of perception, understanding, consolidation of information required for the provision of mental and intellectual activity of an individual [85, 86]. Patients with a neurocognitive defect complain about memory problems (assimilation of new information, understanding, reproduction of what was seen, heard, or read), performing daily activities, communication with others. When assessing neuropsychological testing and motor activity, defects in communication, attention, recognition, understanding, thinking, motor skills, memorization, and reproduction of a number of words, numbers, and figures are revealed. Adaptive behavior, performance, cognitive activity, comprehension, episodic, procedural, seman-

tic, operational, fixation, short-term memory, as well as financial management, and family relationships are affected [87, 88]. Cognitive impairment is not associated with drug intake, critical self-esteem of cognitive potential is maintained, and the degree of decline is within the range from mild to moderate impairment [89, 90]. When the markers of the neurodegenerative process are detected on the magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) and in the cerebrospinal fluid, the changes in the cognitive sphere are non-dement [91, 92]; while the presence and replication of coronavirus in the structures and organelles of the brain, the smoldering inflammatory process that stimulates the deposition of beta-amyloid and tau protein in neurons of the temporal lobe, are significant factors in the development of Alzheimer's disease in patients with the history of COVID-19, and its progression in patients with existing COVID-19 [93, 94].

**Mental and behavioral disorders** are an integral part of the post-COVID tail [95, 96]. The memory of the illness, its manifestations, fear of death, the possibility of a relapse of the disease, incomplete recovery of physical and mental health, awareness of full or partial dependence on others become the cause of their development, regardless of where and how the patient was treated (in the resuscitation department, intensive care unit, on an outpatient basis, or independently). Preservation and aggravation of somatic ill-being, the emergence of new symptoms, dissatisfaction with the quality of the therapy, and insecurity give rise a maladaptive response of the neurotic and affective register, depending on the type of personality, self-esteem, the degree of compliance and the significance of a particular social trigger [97, 98]. The main clinical forms include psychological distress; post-traumatic stress disorder; asthenia; dysthymia; anhedonia; hypochondria; phobia; anxiety; panic attacks or their subtypes; generalized anxiety disorder; catastrophizing; obsessive states; depression; Alan Baddeley dysexecutive syndrome (DES) as the loss of control over behavior in presence of cognitive and emotional impairments [99–101]. Emotional instability manifests itself in the form of mood swings, dysphoria, irritability, tearfulness, verbal and physical aggression. Behavioural disorders are clinically and prognostically equally significant. Patients are apathetic, hypodynamic, prefer bed rest, self-isolation; their communication with relatives, friends, and work colleagues is disrupted; they have impaired executive functions, decreased appetite, mental, physical, and sexual activity. Attention is focused on somatovisceral manifestations and their change over time. Some patients experience persistent

unpleasant olfactory hallucinations (parosmia, phantosmia) [102, 103]. Attempts by relatives and a doctor to influence the patient's self-esteem provoke psychotic reactions, explosive behavior, conversion disorders, and suicide. A negative contribution to their development is made by the determined (by MRI, PET) damage by the virus of the zones functionally significant for the affect implementation in the anterior parts of the frontal and temporal lobes of the brain [104, 105].

**Autonomic dysfunction** manifests itself in fluctuations in the level of blood pressure (BP) and heart rate at rest, with verticalization, low physical exertion, forced exhalation with closed nose and mouth, breath holding with sharp straining (Valsalva test) [106, 107]. When performing ortho- and clinostatic tests, postural orthostatic hypotension and orthostatic tachycardia without hypotension (postural tachycardia syndrome, POTS) are detected [108, 109]. In the supine position (in 41% of patients) and in upright position (in 72%), the patients have a sensation of "falling down", non-systemic dizziness [110]; as well as a high probability of arrhythmias [111, 112], vasodepressor [113, 114] or reflex syncope (nocturnal, during defecation) [115], Takotsubo cardiomyopathy as reversible dyskinesia of the left ventricle of the heart threatening the patient's life associated with catecholaminemia, and stress hyperactivity of sympathetic nervous system [116, 117]. Another clinical phenomenon which requires attention is the platypnea-orthodeoxia syndrome (POS). The patients seek medical help due to the positional dyspnea (tachypnea) in verticalization, which causes panic; in a horizontal position, the patient's condition is normal [118, 119]. Similar symptoms occur during any physical activity accompanied by brain hypoperfusion [106, 110, 120]. At the time of the onset of paroxysm, a situational drop in saturation in the range of 8–12% is recorded. The main contingent is represented by patients with the history of acute respiratory distress syndrome [118].

The basic signs of **autoimmune autonomic ganglionopathy, upper and lower brainstem and endocrine dysfunction**, in addition to those indicated, include disorders of thermoregulation (sudden daily temperature fluctuations in the form of hyper-/hypothermia, poor cold/heat tolerance, poikilothermia), sleep (insomnia); spontaneously occurring episodes of dyspnea, excessive sweating; vegetative (cardiac, abdominal, dysuric) paroxysms; cough/vasovagal syncope (bettolepsy, respiratory seizure); Reynaud's syndrome; irritable bowel syndrome; loss of appetite; anorexia; asthenodynamia/exhaustion; dysmenorrhea; libido; secondary (central) hypo- and hyperthyroidism;

Graves' disease (malignant exophthalmos); hypocorticism (adrenal insufficiency); syndrome of inappropriate secretion of antidiuretic hormone (SIADH) [121–123]. Neurophthalmic autonomic syndromes (Horner, Adie – Holmes) develop extremely rarely [124, 125].

**Neurotrophic and metabolic disorders** attract attention not only in the acute, but also in the post-COVID period. Their development is associated with the neurotropic, inflammatory potential of SARS-CoV-2, reactivation of *Herpes zoster*, prolonged immobilization of the patient, local tissue ischemia, diabetes mellitus, sensory, autonomic neuropathy, prolonged use of antihypertensive, sedative drugs, vasopressors, muscle relaxants, and corticosteroids [126, 127]. Clinically significant manifestations include Melkersson–Rosenthal syndrome [128]; periorbital edema; cellulitis; orbital cellulitis; necrosis; perforation of the hard palate [129]; ectasia of the salivary glands; dry mouth (xerostomia) [130], xerosis, dry cornea of the eyes (xerophthalmia, dry eye syndrome) [131]; hair loss/alopecia [132]; heterotopic ossification [133]; decrease in bone mineral density; osteoporosis; osteosclerosis; osteonecrosis of the talus, calcaneus, humerus, or femur [134]; "frostbitten" fingers, COVID toes/pseudo-chilblain [135]; typical and atypical bedsores (localization in the face, anterior chest wall, abdomen, iliac crests, knees) [136, 137]; ulcers of the mucous membranes of the lips, cheeks, gums, oral cavity, hard palate, and tongue [138].

**Muscle lesion (myalgia, myopathy, myasthenic syndrome).** The development and subacute course of the inflammatory process, infection of muscle cells expressing receptors of angiotensin-converting enzyme 2, as well as prolonged immobilization, ventilation of the lungs with the use of muscle relaxants, the use of chloroquine, hydroxychloroquine, ribavirin, and corticosteroids cause the development and persistence of local edema in patients, muscle induration, muscle weakness, fatigue, myalgia, dyspnea, and weight loss (decrease in muscle mass). In-depth instrumental (electromyography, MRI, ultrasound examination of the muscles of the upper and lower extremities, heart, diaphragm, phrenic nerve in the neck, intercostal muscles, muscles of the upper and lower extremities) and laboratory (determination of the blood levels of pro-inflammatory cytokines, CPK, myoglobin) examinations, as well as study of muscle tissue during biopsy and autopsy reveal in patients reliable signs of damage to the neuromuscular apparatus in the form of flaccid tetraparesis/tetraplegia; dysphagia; myasthenic muscle fatigue; sarcopenia (myopenia); inflammatory myopathy; cardiomyopathy; myositis; muscle necrosis (rhab-

domyolysis); atrophy of the muscles of the diaphragm, intercostal muscles, abdomen, skeletal muscles; dysfunction; hypertrophy; fibrosis of the muscles of the diaphragm during artificial pulmonary ventilation; an increase in the blood levels of total and MB-fraction of CPK [139, 140]. Attention is drawn to the heterogeneity of clinical forms. Critical illness myopathy (CIM) ranks first; other variants arising in the acute and post-COVID period are rare, these include paraspinal COVID-myositis of the lumbar muscles and pelvic girdle, faciobulbar limb form; post-vaccination COVID-myositis; inflammatory and immune myopathies (IIM), myositis, dermatomyositis; generalized, local myasthenia gravis *de novo* [141, 142]; some of them (rhabdomyolysis, dermatomyositis with antibodies to MDA5, necrotizing autoimmune myositis/NAM/anti-HMGCR myopathy subtype IIM) can be fatal [143, 144]. Differential diagnostics enables to rule out idiopathic inflammatory myopathies, statin-associated autoimmune myopathy, dermatomyositis, poliomyositis in connective tissue diseases; anti-SS-OM myositis, secondary neurogenic forms of muscle damage in positional compression neuropathy; phrenic neuropathy in diabetes mellitus, alimentary insufficiency, inflammatory autoimmune, drug-induced forms of polyneuropathy, sensomotor axonal polyneuropathy of critical conditions (critical illness polyneuropathy, CIP), polyneuropathy-myopathy (CIPM, CINM) [145, 146]. Intensive care unit acquired limb and trunk weakness (ICUAW) is common but rare [147]. Early recognition, definition of complication nosology, knowledge of the pathogenesis and course of the pathological process allow timely prescribing and conducting personalized therapy and rehabilitation, minimizing the development of negative functional consequences in a particular patient.

**Dysfunction of the basal ganglia, nigrostriatal system, and cerebellum.** Dysfunction of the basal ganglia is a rare form of damage to the nervous system in COVID-19. It is associated with intracerebral hemorrhages, neuroinflammation as a necrotic form of hemorrhagic leukoencephalopathy, cerebral infarctions, deep cerebral vein thrombosis caused by arteritis/endotheliitis, hypercoagulation of subcortical vessels, multilevel damage (cortical and subcortical segments, upper and medial segments of the trunk, cerebellum), the causes of which include also parainfectious autoimmune, toxic-hypoxic and drug-induced brain lesions [148, 149]. The niveau diagnosis, when neuroimaging is impossible, is based on the assessment of motor manifestations. These include hand tremor, myoclonus of the soft palate, cerebellar ataxia, catatonia, akathisia,

akineti-rigid syndrome, akinetic mutism, locked-in syndrome, choreic hyperkinesia, generalized and local myoclonus, and opsoclonus-myoclonus [150–152]. In the post-COVID period, the retaining of neuroinflammation, oxidative distress in these patients, as well as the accumulation of alpha-synuclein in the brain structures, and the induction of local autoimmune reactions are important conditions for the development and progression of the neurodegenerative process after neuroinvasion [153, 154]. The destructive effect of COVID-19 is especially pronounced in patients with Parkinson's and Alzheimer's diseases [155, 156]. The mortality rate is higher in case of Alzheimer's disease [157].

**Drug-induced complications.** Drugs used in the treatment of COVID-19 patients can cause the development of paresthesias (lopinavir/ritonavir), headache (azithromycin, tocilizumab), myalgia, myositis, toxic myopathy, rhabdomyolysis (chloroquine, hydroxychloroquine, azithromycin, colchicine, linezolid, corticosteroids), neuromyopathy (chloroquine, hydroxychloroquine), visual and hearing impairment (chloroquine, hydroxychloroquine), dizziness, ataxia (azithromycin, hydroxychloroquine, umifenovir/arbido), drug-induced arrhythmias, hypotension, fainting, seizures, cardiac arrest (chloroquine, hydroxychloroquine, remdesivir, azithromycin), cerebral thrombotic microangiopathy, leukoencephalopathy (tocilizumab) [158–161]. Some drugs cause emotional disorders (chloroquine, azithromycin, lopinavir/ritonavir, tocilizumab, corticosteroids, interferon  $\alpha 2b$ ), sleep disorders (azithromycin, interferon  $\alpha 2b$ ) [158]. Corticosteroids, tocilizumab, and interferon  $\alpha 2b$  have a negative effect on cognitive and executive functions [160]. Abnormal behavior, delirium, exaltation, and hallucinations are provoked by chloroquine, hydroxychloroquine, corticosteroids, lopinavir/ritonavir, interferon  $\alpha 2b$ , umifenovir/arbido, and favipiravir [158, 160].

The lethal outcome, intracerebral hemorrhage, ischemic stroke, thrombosis of the cerebral sinuses and veins with/without thrombocytopenia, Bell's palsy, dysphonia, tremor, acute transverse myelitis, acute disseminated encephalomyelitis, Guillain-Barré syndrome, and focal epileptic seizures *de novo* were registered in administration of AstraZeneca, Pfizer, Moderna, Janssen, Covaxin vaccines [162–165], however these complications, even given their tragic nature, do not occur more often than in the vaccine prophylaxis of other infections. The benefits of vaccination at the population level far outweigh the risks of neurological complications. Anti-COVID vaccines are most proba-



bly a provoking factor, a trigger, but not a cause of their development.

# CONCLUSION

Thus, the main target of SARS-CoV-2 is the respiratory tract, but its next targets are the brain, muscle and immune systems. Neurological complications such as acute cerebrovascular failure, impaired consciousness, and skeletal muscle damage develop most probably in patients with severe infection course. Involvement of the central nervous system in the pathological process is a predictor of a poor prognosis. In such patients, the condition can deteriorate quickly and lethal outcome can occur. When assessing clinically the condition of patients, doctors, regardless of their specialty, need to pay close attention not only to the respiratory manifestations of the disease, but also to neurological symptoms, the presence and progression of which is possible both in the acute and post-acute periods (COVID-19 Long Tail).

# ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

**Author contribution.** Belopasov V.V. — concept of the review, literature analysis, manuscript editing, Zhuravleva E.N., Nugmanova N.P., Abdzashitova A.T. — consult of the patient, illustrations. The authors made a substantial contribution to the conception of the work, acquisition, analysis, interpretation of data for the work, drafting and revising the work, final approval of the version to be published and agree to be accountable for all aspects of the work.

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## AUTHORS INFO

The author responsible for the correspondence:

**Vladimir V. Belopasov**, MD, Dr. Sci. (Med.), Professor; address: 121 Bakinskaya Street, Astrakhan 414000, Russia; e-mail: belopasov@yandex.ru; eLibrary SPIN: 6089-1321; ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0458-0703>

Co-authors:

**Ekaterina N. Zhuravleva**; e-mail: neurologKzh@rambler.ru

**Natalia P. Nugmanova**, MD, Cand. Sci (Med.); e-mail: nanu@rambler.ru;

**Adela T. Abdrashitova**, MD, Dr. Sci. (Med.); e-mail: adelia-79@yandex.ru; eLibrary SPIN: 1820-0380